

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2103

May 25, 2004

The Honorable Roderick R. Paige
Secretary of Education
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary Paige,

It is with great urgency that I write to express my deep concern about the effects on the children and schools of the 3rd Congressional District of Massachusetts of the new estimates on child poverty that have resulted in profound cuts in Title I funds for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. At a time when school districts are suffering from state-initiated cutbacks in education funding, and when many are being forced to lay off teachers, teacher aides, and other classroom or administrative staff, these cuts only add to the stresses affecting public education. It is also ironic that such deep cuts are being carried out exactly when public schools are struggling to meet the accountability and academic standards federally-mandated by the No Child Left Behind Act.

There is no reason to believe that child poverty in Massachusetts as a whole has been reduced by 28 percent since last year, as the Title I allocations provided for Massachusetts would appear to claim. It is my understanding that the poverty data used by the Department of Education to determine the Fiscal Year 2004 Title I allocations (for the school year beginning September 1, 2004) are *four years old* and pre-date the current recession. Many of the communities that will see cuts in their Title I funding have borne the brunt of the economic downturn, a fact that is not reflected in the new formula. I question whether economic conditions in areas suffering deep cuts under the Department's formula could have changed so dramatically in so short a time.

Quite frankly, I strongly disagree with your conclusions. I would like to see *current* data that demonstrates communities such as Fall River, Attleboro and Worcester in my district have seen such reductions in child poverty that reductions in Title I funds of 8.97 percent, 12.23 percent and 9.75 percent are merited. I ask that you forward to me such data that reflects *current* conditions in the communities of the 3rd Congressional District so that I may review it myself in consultation with the appropriate school superintendents and state education officials.

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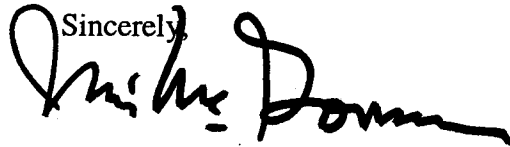
<http://www.house.gov/mcgovern/>

This is an urgent matter, Mr. Secretary, not only because of the harm that will be caused to Title I funded programs, but also because the amount of funds to be made available for several other federally-supported elementary and secondary programs are based upon the Title I formula, such as Title IV programs and after-school programs (21st Century Learning Communities).

With so much at stake, I request that you reconsider your decision to use such questionable data to determine Title I allocations. At a minimum, I strongly urge you to revise these allocations so that funds may be provided to "hold harmless" states and communities most affected by these cuts. I will also be working with my colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate to overturn these decisions or to minimize their impact on the children, schools and communities of central and southeastern Massachusetts.

Thank you for your immediate attention to these grave concerns. I look forward to receiving your response soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim McGovern", written over the word "Sincerely,".

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

JPM:cb

Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies: Massachusetts
 Final FY 2004 Allocations
 3rd Congressional District of Massachusetts

Ashland	- 15%	- \$ 16,052
Attleboro	- 12.23%	- \$ 102,459
Auburn	- 32.67 %	- \$ 70,242
Boylston	+ 36.25%	+ \$ 5,735
(Only town in Massachusetts to receive increase)		

Clinton	- 12.66%	- \$ 43,126
Dighton-Rehoboth	- 15.00%	- \$ 17,029
Fall River	- 8.97%	- \$ 700,506
Franklin	- 15.00%	- \$ 36,570
Holliston	- 15.00%	- \$ 19,820
Hopkinton	- 100.00%	- \$ 88,856
King Philip	- 32.67%	- \$ 47,979
Marlborough	- 13.63%	- \$ 141,776
Medway	- 15.00%	- \$ 14,639
North Attleboro	- 12.31%	- \$ 56,385
Northboro-Southboro	- no change (0)	
Northborough	- 15.00%	- \$ 14,749
Plainville	- 32.67%	- \$ 19,192
Seekonk	- 15.00%	- \$ 24,800
Shrewsbury	- 12.66%	- \$ 63,204
Somerset	- 15.00%	- \$ 17,587
Southborough	No change (0)	
Swansea	- 15.00%	- \$ 42,170
Wachusett	- 15.00%	- \$ 48,992
West Boylston	- 15.00%	- \$ 9,505
Westborough	- 15.00%	- \$ 19,262
Worcester	- 9.75%	- \$ 1,555,842
Wrentham	- 11.39%	- \$ 14,716